

Zotero report: A brief review

The search and collection for what has been (and is being) said about any particular topic is the cornerstone for any engagement in scientific or scholarly production. In this effort, technological tools can be of great assistance in managing the gathering of information. Engaging with the sheer amount of information that is now available through libraries and research centres can be extensive and tedious. A reference management system, such as Zotero [zoh-tair-oh], enables researchers to fulfil this task in an effective, efficient and productive way.

Not only is it relevant to organize references in such a manner but to be able to work in collaboration with other researchers and share information easily and quickly . This is precisely the case for the Ageing-Communication-Media network, which comprises researchers from three continents with different disciplinary backgrounds. For the purpose of sharing valuable information of the work being published worldwide on the topics of interest, the adoption of Zotero as the reference manager for the network has been advantageous and essential for the consolidation of the network, as well as pointing to the potential for continuing to build a thriving networked community.

The major benefit of making use of Zotero is economy of time and effort. Once resources are put into the Zotero system, it is a tool that allows researchers to focus on the investigation itself rather than on formatting issues. It creates a database with all saved references found both online and print. Zotero allows for cumulative storage by saving references in one or more databases that may be useful for future projects. Once saved as a reference in the database it is immediately citable in the working document. It organizes the database by collections and tags, which allows for easy and quick search

of saved references. It works with three operating systems (MAC, windows Linux), three internet browsers (Firefox, Chrome, Safari), and two word processing softwares (Microsoft Word, OpenOffice). It allows for online consultation of the database without the need for downloading the software to access the saved information. And most importantly, it allows for collaborative work, both privately and publicly.

The A-C-M network has greatly benefited from making Zotero the official reference management system for the team. Each unit is able to manage their own list of references as well as share the management of a common dataset. Sorting references depending on relevant criteria such as language of reference, and the institution that added the reference is possible, an important feature given the international nature of the network. It has allowed its members to add their own publications, export them easily in bibliographic format, and share them with fellow researchers. It has facilitated open and public consultation of the database, whereby any Internet user can have access to read the full list of references, as we recently learned when a future guest speaker made suggestions on his list of publications in our database. It lets new researchers access collections and add new and valuable references to expand the team's interests and awareness. It is for these –and the above– reasons that Zotero has contributed to the efficient performance, collaborative potential, high level of productivity, and the scholarly quality of the A-C-M network as it has evolved and will continue to evolve.

Notably, the A-C-M network has built a common database of 509 references on the intersections between ageing, mobile technology, ICTs, culture and communications to date. The list is made up of journal articles (162), books (125), reports (78), official statistical webpages (68), book chapters (49), conference papers (17), newspaper (4) and

magazine articles (3), doctoral theses (2), and a meeting presentation. References are in several languages, mainly in English (402), but also in Spanish (93), Catalan (17), Dutch (14), French (4), Malay (3), and German (1). Within this list are book reviews (3), editorial prefaces (2), and third party bibliographic lists (2). It also contains references published from 1970 onwards, but as becomes evident, an overwhelming amount of publications were released within the last twelve years. Lastly, the database is composed of works of worldwide authors from the most diverse fields within the social sciences: economics, sociology, political science, history, communication studies, statistics, journalism, and so on.

To conclude, it is worth asserting that in a team-work environment it is important to set standards in working procedures, and undoubtedly Zotero has contributed to this process (see Zotero Report Appendix for a detailed description of the A-C-M Network database).